

George Davis

Born Tasmania 1930

Studied Painting Hobart Technical College under Jack Carington Smith.

1951 Awarded Tasmanian Government Travelling Arts Scholarship.

1951-54 Studied at Royal Academy Schools, London.

1961 Won competition external mural for A.B.C. Television Studios, Hobart.

1961 Represented Whitechapel Exhibition "Recent Australian Painting"

1963 Exhibition by invitation of the Arts Council of Australia at the 2nd Paris Biennial for Young Painters.

One Man exhibitions held:

1965 Canberra by invitation ACT Arts Council

1970 Hobart

1975 Richmond

1976 Commissioned by the Tasmanian Arts Advisory Board to interpret Tasmania's Islands.

1978 Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

1978 Richmond

**Past teacher at the Art School (Hobart Technical College),
Adult Education Board and privately.**

**Represented Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and many private
collections in Australia and overseas.**

Foreword

The series 'Man and his Art' was one of the earliest ventures of the Fine Arts Committee; it has also, I believe, proved one of the most successful and rewarding. The series was designed to allow the invited artist not simply to exhibit his work but to let us glimpse his less public self, by showing us for instance how he re-views his development or how his methods generate a finished work, or by revealing his ideas in words as well as in images. This is a wide brief, and over the years each artist has interpreted it in an individual way; perhaps that in itself tells us something about the man.

Clearly George Davis is an appropriate choice for the series. He is not content with technical facility but committed to the honest expression of his personal feelings, convictions and vision. His respect for the integrity of the subject, selflessly observed, and his deeply felt responsiveness have united in an art true to the man.

Ron Hood
Acting Chairman

**UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA
FINE ARTS COMMITTEE**

The original concept of "The Man and his Art" exhibitions has changed since Room 139 of the Arts Building and its humble presentation. It has become something more than the showing of a method of work as the first shows undoubtedly were – sketches, written notes, watercolours and examples of the finished product. It has developed more into a retrospective view of the work of painters and printmakers and assumed a higher profile – this is a good thing in many ways but it seems to have lost contact with the university students.

It is impractical to exhibit fragile sketch books, folders, etc. except by the most costly and elaborate means. In this exhibition I have tried to retain something of the commencing values of 1967 while following the later trend, though there is no exhaustive sequence shown in ground work studies for – say – the A.B.C. wall or the proposed but unused illustrations for Nan Chauncy's "Mathinna's People" which entailed facial familiarisation by means of pencil copies of Beattie's "Last Tasmanians" photographs in the Royal Society's collection, life drawing and previous project interest in photographing and making tracings of the aboriginal petroglyphs at Green's Creek and other sites.

An early influence on my work was Jack Carington Smith as can be seen by the Tarn Shelf watercolour. The three years I spent in London as the result of a scholarship were concentrated almost entirely on drawing. The chief influence on this period was I think the people who were served up to us in the drawing class and my learning to look which is a most difficult state to achieve. Fleetwood-Walker, A.R.A., one of the two drawing/painting masters who honoured their associateship with the R.A. schools (Architecture, Painting and Sculpture, 80 students in all) took an interest and impressed me greatly with his unassuming style and sensitivity. My peer friends Don Pass, Brian Crouch and Mary Oliver were also extremely truthful draughtsmen. I was tremendously impressed with the Meyndert Hobbemas – his absolute mastery over the observer and so, through his work, making clear the meaning of picture construction. Henry Rousseau's conviction and unashamed truth and the completeness of his world made the hair rise on the back of my neck when I came across the first painting at the Tate. There were many influences – the great exhibitions of these years and the superb collections. Of the few paintings I made at this period the best examples are Green Park and the portrait of Don's wife – which was one of mine accepted for the 1956 Australian Women's Weekly Travelling Exhibition.

A much later influence was Edith Holmes' work ethic and her "struggle", as she described it, with difficult compositions.

My drawings are usually to find out and to discipline and obviously they are of things I am intensely interested in. I draw them for themselves and also to understand. I can apply the dynamics to other situations in painting or recognise them when they occur if I am sensitive, alert, aware enough in time or at the time. Painting can be a protracted business. The habitual observations or direct drawing of people or birds or objects sometimes results in pertinent comment, but just in passing, not as a set gesture. The "Pregnancy", "Adult education", "Braying challenge meek chick", "Albatross colony in full swing", are the results of literally hundreds of drawings and done quickly in continuance. I have placed the latter drawing next to an earlier detailed study to make one comparison.

My paintings are sometimes specific if I can work very quickly and hold on to the image. Sometimes I am courageous, sometimes fed up with the exercise or the rules (any rules), sometimes in painting into a landscape over a long (or short) period other truths emerge. I may have an idea I want to put across, for instance the incoming tide, with skeletal hulks floating and attracted to the edge of the canvas like matches in a saucer of water – it may have commenced as a setting for birds. I sometimes like the result, though hate the hard work to achieve it – if one could quickly simply project the polychrome vision – which is the reason of course, for one of the adages in painting viz. “keep it simple”.

I painted the renamed “Fulmar” from finding the first part-skeletal remains of one on Seven Mile Beach, but misidentified my specimen (bad mistake) and called it “Priocella” – the pen drawings of its head and peculiar nostril are shown. The manner of its arrival is the subject of the picture and was my entry to the second Paris Biennial for Young Painters, to which I was invited with eleven other Australians. Sometimes something seen with fresh eyes and mind in an unresolved canvas, is strong enough, persistent enough to be a starting point and may take a year or two or more to coax out.

I am most concerned about our environment and suggested and participated in the first A.B.C. film on the pollution problem. People then hoped it would go away, it was just another news item. ***It is essential that it remain a vital, living issue.*** My work has been concerned with this aspect since, “Sorell”, finished in 1970, “Plastic Shore” and “Tranmere”, “River Derwent 1916-19?” with the portraits of our beloved leaders of the time and “Lauderdale”.

My interest in birds has been constant since school days and recently I was fortunate to receive a commission which enabled me to visit and work at several difficult of access bird habitats, and gain a new dimension to my work. I have been able to achieve a life long ambition to visit that great world wildlife sanctuary, Macquarie Island – no photograph or film of which can give one any true idea of the sheer quantity and abundance of wildlife at that place. Painting, writing are the only ways to do that.

My daughter Georgina has chosen many of the drawings and nicely proportioned the mounts and placements and selected the frames.

My sincere thanks to the people who loaned the pictures difficult though the parting was and to the Fine Arts Committee.

***Measurements in cm. H.xW.
All pictures unless otherwise stated lent by the artist.
Enquiries phone 44 1164.***

CATALOGUE

Paintings:

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|---------|----|--|--------|
| 1 | GREEN PARK
Oil on linen 71 x 91.5
<i>Mr. & Mrs. R. Brown</i> | 1953/4 | 13 | PORTRAIT OF DACE
Oil on canvas 45 x 37.5
<i>Dr. C. Shugg</i> | 1970 |
| 2 | LONDON ROOFTOPS
Oil on flax canvas 43 x 56
<i>Collection of the artist</i> | 1953/4 | 14 | TRANMERE ROAD
Oil on flax canvas 88.5 x 121.5
<i>Private collection</i> | 1970 |
| 3 | NORMA PASS
Oil on plywood 59.6 x 44.3
<i>Collection of the artist</i> | 1953 | 15 | SORELL
Oil on Burnie board 69 x 139
<i>Mrs. Shirley Walker</i> | 1970 |
| 4 | CLIFTON BEACH
Oil on flax canvas 39.5 x 49
<i>Miss D. Stonor</i> | 1958 | 16 | PLASTIC SHORE
Oil on flax canvas 66.5 x 77
<i>Mr. & Mrs. B. Bennetto</i> | 1970 |
| 5 | CARTOON FOR A.B.C. TV STUDIOS MURAL
Scale 1" to 1'
Oil on Burnie board 45.1 x 182.6
<i>Collection of the artist</i> | 1959/60 | 17 | STORM BAY
Oil on flax canvas 60 x 72.5
<i>Mrs. C. Shugg</i> | 1970 |
| 6 | HALF SCALE DETAIL, A.B.C. TV STUDIOS MURAL
Oil on Burnie board 137 x 45.3
<i>Dame Enid Lyons</i> | 1960 | 18 | TINA
Oil on duck 75.5 x 60.2
<i>Ms. M. Davis</i> | 1970 |
| 7 | FULMAR
Entry 2nd Paris Biennial for Young Painters
Oil on Gesso and silver 76.4 x 119
<i>Collection of the artist</i> | 1963 | 19 | SLOW GLASS
Oil on flax canvas 45.4 x 61
<i>Mr. J.D. Steane</i> | 1973/5 |
| 8 | STUDY OF FIGURE (Self-Portrait)
Oil on duck on board 93 x 60.4
<i>Mr. & Mrs. P.J. McKeown</i> | 1964 | 20 | BROADMARSH QUARRY
Oil on "canvas board" 61 x 76.5
<i>Collection of the artist</i> | 1973 |
| 9 | 1967
Oil on Burnie board 61 x 91.5
<i>Collection of the artist</i> | 1967 | 21 | TEAL LANDING
Oil on flax canvas 101 x 93.5
<i>Dr. J. Cartledge</i> | 1975 |
| 10 | THE AUTUMN AFTER '67
Oil on flax canvas 52.4 x 76
<i>Collection of the artist</i> | 1968 | 22 | BATING HAWK
Oil on flax canvas 90.2 x 121
<i>Mr. & Mrs. T.F. Knight</i> | 1975 |
| 11 | PITTWATER ROAD
Oil on flax canvas 50.3 x 60.4
<i>Mrs. R. Davies</i> | 1969 | 23 | CORMORANT I
Oil on flax canvas 90.3 x 73.3
<i>Mr. & Mrs. C. Alcorso</i> | 1975 |
| 12 | DOG TRACK
Oil on board 91.5 x 135
<i>Collection of the artist</i> | 1970 | 24 | CORMORANT II
Oil on flax canvas 107 x 76
<i>Mrs. M. Levis</i> | 1975 |
| | | | 25 | SQUEAKY TOWER
Oil on board 91.5 x 60.5
<i>Mr. & Mrs. S. Walker</i> | 1975 |
| | | | 26 | LAUDERDALE
Oil on canvas 64 x 95
<i>Mrs. G.A.D. Davis</i> | 1975 |

- 27 DERWENT RIVER 1916 - ? 1975
Oil on flax canvas 122 x 183
Collection of the artist
- 28 NUDE 1975
Oil on duck 68.5 x 53.5
Dr. J. Marwood
- 29 GULL CRY 1976
Fisher Island
Oil on flax canvas on board 43.4 x 69.8
Mr. Col Brown
- 30 SOUTH COLONY, 1977
ALBATROSS ISLAND
Oil on flax canvas on board 73 x 58
Mr. D.P. Davis
- 31 LAND OF THE SNAIL 1977
Albatross Island
Oil on flax canvas on board 58 x 73
Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery
- 32 GOOSE ISLAND LIGHT 1977
Oil and charcoal on flax canvas on
32oz card 76.2 x 101.7
Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery
- 33 JUST NOW 1977
Albatross Island
Oil & charcoal on flax canvas on
32oz card 45.2 x 57.9
Mr. & Mrs. W.J. Hamilton
- 34 PRION AND CHICK 1977
Oil on flax canvas on 32oz card
45.2 x 57.9
Dr. J. Cartledge
- 35 PREENING WHITE CAPPAIR 1977
Oil and charcoal on flax canvas on
32oz card 45.2 x 57.9
Mr. N. Brothers
- 36 SLEEPING WHITE CAPPAIR 1977
Oil and charcoal on flax canvas on
32oz card 45.2 x 57.9
Collection of the artist
- 37 NIGHTFALL, ALBATROSS 1977
Oil on flax canvas on 32oz card
57.9 x 45.2
Collection of the artist
- 38 SENTINALS, 1977
Albatross Island
Oil on flax canvas on 32oz card
57.9 x 45.2
Collection of the artist
- 39 SEA MIST, 1977
Albatross Island
Oil on flax canvas on board 58 x 73
Collection of the artist
- 40 SUMMER ALBATROSS, WINTER
GOOSE 1977
Albatross Is. & Goose Is.
Oil on flax canvas on board
Oil on Irish linen on board 58 x 73 x 2
Dr. L.A.F. Young
- 41 SOUND OF GANNETS I 1977
Black Pyramid
Oil and charcoal on flax canvas on
board 58 x 73
Collection of the artist
- 42 SOUND OF GANNETS II 1977
Black Pyramid
Oil and charcoal and pencil on flax
canvas on 32oz card 57.9 x 45.2
Collection of the artist
- 43 PAUL FISHING 1977
West Coast of the Albatross
Oil and charcoal on flax canvas on
32oz card 76.2 x 101.7
Collection of the artist
- 44 HEAT OF THE DAY, 1977
Albatross Island
Oil and pencil on Burnie board
26.8 x 35.5
Private collection
- 45 MOUNTAIN PARROTS
FEEDING 1978
Oil on natural flax canvas on 32oz
card 73.1 x 94.8
Mr. & Mrs. P.R. Stone
- 46 BRIGHT DAY, Fisher Island 1979
Oil on canvas on board 57.8 x 44.7
Collection of the artist

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|----|---|------|------------------|--|------|
| 47 | THE ROCK POOL,
Fisher Island
Oil on canvas on board 57.8 x 44.7
Collection of the artist | 1979 | 59 | SWAN
Oil on canvas 122 x 121.8
Collection of the artist | 1980 |
| 48 | LANE POSTS, Fisher Island
Oil on Burnie board 26.2 x 35
Collection of the artist | 1979 | 60 | ALBATROSS
Oil on flax canvas 111.9 x 149.3
Collection of the artist | 1980 |
| 49 | HOVERING HAWK,
Badger Island
Oil on Burnie board 26.8 x 35.8
Miss L. Mansfield | 1979 | 61 | MEMORIAL TO ROGER
BARKER,
Macquarie Island Expeditioner 1978
Oil on flax canvas 165.6 x 183
Collection of the artist | 1980 |
| 50 | OTAGO BAY
Oil on flax canvas 76.1 x 119.2
Collection of the artist | 1980 | 62 | THE SOUND FLOATS AWAY
Oil on flax canvas 165.2 x 181.7
Collection of the artist | 1980 |
| 51 | PARROTS
Oil on flax canvas on 32oz card
58 x 73.2
Collection of the artist | 1980 | Drawings: | | |
| 52 | NATIVE HEN
Oil on flax canvas 94.8 x 64
Collection of the artist | 1980 | 63 | WORKMEN, ROYAL ACADEMY
LANE
Pen and wash 25.2 x 17.2
Collection of the artist | 1951 |
| 53 | INDIGNANT ALBATROSS
Oil on flax canvas 101.1 x 89.5
Collection of the artist | 1980 | 64 | THREE THISTLE STUDIES
Pen 18.3 x 11 x 3
Collection of the artist | 1952 |
| 54 | WATTLE BIRD
Irish linen on card 56 x 71.3
Collection of the artist | 1980 | 65 | PREGNANT WOMAN
Pen 24.8 x 10.5
Collection of the artist | 1953 |
| 55 | THE PYRAMID
Oil on flax canvas 122.6 x 114.7
Collection of the artist | 1980 | 66 | "IT IS FUNNY HOW THAT CHURCH
SPIRE HAS TURNED QUITE
YELLOW NOW"
Reed pen 38.7 x 27.9
Collection of the artist | 1953 |
| 56 | GREY THRUSH
Oil on flax canvas on 32oz card
49.1 x 76.5
Collection of the artist | 1980 | 67 | CHERRY TREE
Pencil 21. x 28.2
Collection of the artist | 1954 |
| 57 | STUDY FOR THE FALCON
Oil on linen on card 57.4 x 44.4
Collection of the artist | 1980 | 68 | SILVER GREY PETREL-
FULMAR
Pen 26.4 x 32.8
Collection of the artist | 1959 |
| 58 | STUDY FOR THE SWAN
Oil on flax canvas on 32oz card
33 x 44.5
Collection of the artist | 1980 | 69 | SWAMP GUMS
Indian Ink on bark 41.5 x 27 - irregular
Mrs. Shirley Walker | 1959 |

- 70 **POLYHYMNA** 1962
Figure study for A.B.C. TV studios
Mural Chalk and charcoal 75.5 x 34
Mrs. C. Shugg
- 71 **EUTERPE** 1962
Figure study for A.B.C. TV Studios
Mural Chalk and charcoal 60.9 x 34.1
Collection of the artist
- 72 **WYNUM WARNS OFF MANOON & TANA FROM THE SACRED CLIFFS** 1966
Three sketches proposed for "Mathinna's People" by Nan Chauncy
18.3 x 24.5 x 2 24.5 x 17.7
Collection of the artist
- 73 **PROPOSED ILLUSTRATIONS FOR "MATHINNA'S PEOPLE"** 1966
by Nan Chauncy
Pen 45.9 x 22.6 top & 18.3 bottom (3)
Collection of the artist
- 74 **HIDDEN WYRUM'S WONDERMENT - "A WHALE WITH WINGS"** 1966
Proposed illustration for "Mathinna's People" by Nan Chauncy
Mixed media 42.6 x 26.6
Mrs. M. Comber
- 75 **A FACE OF MAEVE** 1966
Charcoal 33.5 x 24.5
Collection of the artist
- 76 **THE ONLY EXISTING DRAWING OF THE CHECKERED RISDON ROUNDABOUT** 1968
Pen and watercolour 54.4 x 49.3
Collection of the artist
- 77 **LONG YEARS OF ADULT EDUCATION** 1959-1969
Pen 21 x 33.8 x 7
Collection of the artist
- 78 **ADULT EDUCATION** 1969
21.7 x 32.4
Collection of the artist
- 79 **MUMMIFIED RATS** 1970
Pen and pencil 26.2 x 40.6
Collection of the artist
- 80 **BLACK DUCK - ANUS SUPERCILIOUSA** 1975
Pencil 51.9 x 33.7
Collection of the artist
- 81 **SEVERAL BRITTLE STARS** 1975/6
Pencil and watercolour
Top 28.4 x 38.1 Bottom 20.8 x 33.6
Collection of the artist
- 82 **NUDIBRANCHS** 1976
Pencil and watercolour 20.8 x 33.6
Collection of the artist
- 83 **A SPECIES OF STALKED BARNACLES FROM THE GIANT CRAB** 1975
Biro 26.3 x 36.3
Collection of the artist
- 84 **BLUE TONGUE** 1976
Pencil 24.7 x 26.3
Mr. H. Maasevien
- 85 **ALBATROSS COLONY IN FULL SWING** 1977
Pencil 25 x 37.5
Mr. & Mrs. W. Hamilton
- 86 **MAIN COLONY, ALBATROSS ISLAND** 1977
Pencil 25 x 37.5
Mr. & Mrs. S. Walker
- 87 **ALBATROSS CHICKS** 1977
Pencil 25 x 37.5
Collection of the artist
- 88 **BANDICOOT POUCH YOUNG** 1977
Pencil 33.6 x 23.6
Collection of the artist
- 89 **THE NUGGETS AND NORTH HEAD FROM THE "NELLA DAN"** 1978
Macquarie Island series
Pencil 28 x 34.9
Collection of the artist

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|----|--|---------|-----|---------------------------------------|------|
| 90 | ZANCHLORHYNCHUS
SPINIFER | 1978 | 99 | KOALA | 1980 |
| | Skua's nest near Eagle Rock
Macquarie Island | | | Pencil 36.3 x 27 | |
| | Pencil 27.9 x 34.8 | | | <i>Collection of the artist</i> | |
| | National Parks & Wildlife Service
No.NP1553 | | 100 | SELINOCEREUS BUD | 1980 |
| | | | | Pencil 30.4 x 23.6 | |
| | | | | <i>Collection of the artist</i> | |
| 91 | "NELLA DAN" | 1978 | 101 | SELINOCEREUS FLOWER | 1980 |
| | Macquarie Island series | | | Pastel 30.3 x 23.6 | |
| | Pencil 35 x 28 | | | <i>Collection of the artist</i> | |
| | <i>Collection of the artist</i> | | | | |
| 92 | ROYAL PENGUIN SKULLS | 1978/80 | | Watercolours: | |
| | Macquarie Island series | | 102 | TARN SHELF | 1951 |
| | Pencil 36.5 x 27 | | | 27.3 x 38.3 | |
| | <i>Collection of the artist</i> | | | <i>Collection of the artist</i> | |
| 93 | KINGS AND ELEPHANT SEALS AT
SANDY BAY | 1978 | 103 | SMOKE HAZE AT THE REAL LAKE
PEDDER | 1956 |
| | Macquarie Island series | | | 28 x 33 | |
| | Pencil 28 x 35 | | | <i>Collection of the artist</i> | |
| | <i>Collection of the artist</i> | | 104 | THE REAL LAKE PEDDER | 1956 |
| 94 | SOUND OF A SMALL COLONY OF
ROYALS | 1978 | | 38.7 x 45 | |
| | Macquarie Island series | | | <i>Collection of the artist</i> | |
| | 28 x 35 x 2 | | 105 | STUDY FOR CLIFTON BEACH | 1958 |
| | <i>Collection of the artist</i> | | | 29.2 x 39.1 | |
| 95 | DIVING PETREL AND PRION
BURROWS ON THE PYRAMID - THE
SEA HISSING BENEATH | 1978 | | <i>Collection of the artist</i> | |
| | Charcoal and oil on canvas on 32oz
card 45.2 x 57.8 | | 106 | WALKING DOWN TO MOUNT
RUFUS | 1959 |
| | <i>Collection of the artist</i> | | | 22.8 x 29.9 x 3 | |
| | | | | <i>Collection of the artist</i> | |
| 96 | GULLS AND TERNS | 1978 | | | |
| | Fisher Island | | | | |
| | Pencil 29.8 x 22.8 x 2 | | | | |
| | <i>Collection of the artist</i> | | | | |
| 97 | STUDIES OF IMMATURE
ROCKHOPPER | 1978 | | | |
| | Pencil 27.9 x 38 x 2 | | | | |
| | <i>Collection of the artist</i> | | | | |
| 98 | SNARES CRESTED PENGUIN | 1978 | | | |
| | Pencil 37.5 x 27.4 | | | | |
| | <i>Collection of the artist</i> | | | | |